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AUTHOR Spellman, Kathy; Kent, Martha Whalen
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ABSTRACT

These materials are part of a four-module series, "Competence Is for Everyone," designed to specify and reduce limitations on the learning and use of skills that people experience because of their sex or race. The series identifies three areas that function to maintain inequalities: the process of making judgments or appraisals; practices of social institutions in education, employment, and the mass media; and legal precedents and historical antecedents. Appraisal is treated as it occurs with respect to group membership, i.e., sex and minority status. This discussion guide and transcript of a videotape to be used with the upper level edition of the first module, "Different People," focus on the identification of task and person appraisals by students. (Author/HLM)

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COMPETENCE IS FOR EVERYONE

THE RISE OF ROLAG
Discussion Guide and Transcript of Videotape

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Kathy Spellman and Martha Whalen Kent

University of Vermont

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THE RISE OF ROLAG*

Discussion Guide

The videotape, "The Rise of Rolag," portrays appraisal in a simulated society. Prior to viewing the tape, students should be informed that they will see both task and person appraisals. They should be asked to identify these during the viewing, and be prepared to discuss them afterward. The discussion should touch on the following areas.

- Appraisal elements in the dramatization.
- Personal impact on the subject and on others involved in the drama. This is to include the impact such an event would have on students in the class, if they were to experience the event.
- Personal change in the actions of the major character and others in the drama. This is to include personal change of students in the class, if they were to find themselves in a similar situation.

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*This videotape is recommended for use with Unit 1, "Different People," of the upper level edition.

- Generalization to other situations. Students should be able to identify similar situations in our society and to discuss the appraisal elements, personal impact, and possible change.

Appraisal Analysis

Person Appraisals

1. What are they?

   (Judgments based on who a person is.)

2. Who in the videotape makes them?

   (Galor.)

3. On What basis does Galor make them?

   (On the basis of category membership. The category in this case is "flat heads.")

4. Is this category a justifiable basis for making judgments?

   (No. Apparently it is quite arbitrary.)

Task Appraisals

1. What are the*?

   (Judgments based on how well a person does something.)

2. Who in the videotape makes them?

   (Medias.)

3. On what basis does Medias make these judgments?

   (Medias judges Rolag's ideas to be good ones because they meet predetermined criteria.)

Personal Impact

1. How do person appraisals affect Rolag's performance?

   (When Galor is present, Rolag "stays in the proper place" and offers to do only things that are fitting for a "flat head.")

2. How do task appraisals affect Rolag's performance?

   (Medias's task appraisals encourage Rolag to make more suggestions, to skip outside the category of "flat heads.")

3. Is there any hint whether things will change as a result of Galor's discussion with Medias?

   (The fact that, at the end, Galor asks Rolag to clean up suggests that Rolag's role on Mirth will remain the same.)

Personal Change

1. What might have happened if Galor had listened to Medias's criticism of Mirth?

   (Mirth would have become a society in which rewards were given on the basis of merit rather than on the basis of the shape of the head.)

2. The shape of the head and how it was associated with intelligence was a serious debate in the nineteenth century. What would our society be like if the shape of heads had become important social categories?

Generalization to Other Situations

Are there problems in our society that are similar to those illustrated in the videotape?

(Yes. Examples are discrimination based on minority status, handicaps, age, sex, etc.)

Effectiveness of Simulations

An additional exercise might include a discussion of the effectiveness of simulation techniques to illustrate social processes. Do students think elementary students watching this videotape would get the point? How would your class improve the simulation?

THE RISE OF ROLAG

Transcript

Characters

Galor: "Boss." First-class citizen. Human-size puppet. Wears mask with rounded head as distinguishing characteristic.

Rolag: Lower-class citizen. Human-size puppet. Wears mask with flat head as distinguishing characteristic.

Medias: Dignitary from another planet "in the middle." Human-suze puppet. Head shape neutral.

Sound

Actors wear very large masks that cover their heads. The acting is highly dependent on gestures and exaggerated body movements. Rolag has no vocal lines at all.

Costuming

Medias and Rolag wear satin jumpsuits (to emphasize their high positions) and Rolag's costume is gray, dull homespun (or faded demin.)

Opening Scene

Speaker, dressed casually, yet pleasantly, gives opening narration. Camera moves from speaker to set of simulation and puppet characters during narration.

Narrator: Can we be anything? In our society we believe that people can become anything they want to be. Opportunities to be, to do, and to achieve are unlimited. All we have to do is apply ourselves and get the necessary skills. Sounds great!

But we also believe that certain people can or should only do certain things and not others. Men are strong, rational, independent, and they should be engineers and leaders. Women, Black Americans, and other minority people are emotional and not very dependable. If they act differently, they're just troublemakers.

Can we be anything?

Well, now we are saying that men had better do what men do; women should do what women do; Black, Chicano, Anglo-Saxon, children, adults--all should do what they're supposed to do,

and nobody should cause trouble. So you can be anything, except if you belong to any of these categories.

The problem is: We all belong to categories. We're all male or female, we're all a certain age, and we all belong to racial or ethnic groups. Because of these categories we are expected to do certain things.

The question is: How can we live in such a way that will allow us to develop our abilities regardless of who we are or how we look? To help us understand the question, we have made a simulation or model of the issue. Many people us models or simulations to help them understand complex things. Maps of cities and towns are examples. In science many models and simulations are used, such as those of the planetary system, atoms, molecules. Even the astronauts work in simulated moon environments. To help us see beyond people as categories, we have created characters who are similar except for one physical difference. They are Galors who have round heads and Rolags who have flat heads. Galor and Rolag live on the planet Mirth. They are about to receive an important visitor. Let us see how that visit goes.

What categories are Galor and Rolag in? What are they expected to do? Can they get out of these categories and do different thing? Can they be anything?

Opening Scene of Simulation

Galor and Rolag are at their places. Galor is seated behind a desk, hidden behind the Wall Street Journal, which he is reading. Rolag is seated on the bottom step (stage right, front) drawing on a large pad of newsprint with very fat crayons.

A little music is heard. Phone rings loudly, unsettling Galor so that he drops the newspaper, burying the phone. Irritated, he knocks the paper off the desk, dropping it down for Rolag to clean up (i.e., roles are immediately defined).

Galor: Galor 747 speaking. Ah, yes, yes. Come right up. I've been expecting you. *(Galor places the phone down, delighted, stands, tidies himself, brushing off imaginary dandruff and lint. Meanwhile Rolag, having completed the cleaning task, stands, facing upward, gawking at the strange visitor who has just arrived from stage right.)*

Medias: *(Emits three beeps and talks with a vibrating voice.)* I bring you moon rocks and best wishes from my people. *(Galor accepts the offering dubiously and places them on his desk. Meanwhile he catches sight of Rolag who is still gawking, barks at him, pounds on desk.)*

Galor: Don't just stand there. Get some coffee for my visitor and me! *(Turns to Medias, changing his manner completely as he helps Medias to sit down. Rolag, having tended to the business of the coffee, hands out the cups of coffee. As would be expected, Galor is pompous, but Medias is polite.)*

Medias: Thank you very much! *(Rolag returns to his place; Medias looks after him and visually surveys the situation with interest but doesn't say anything.)*

Galor: *(Sipping coffe.)* Well, well, on with our business, the planning of the Second Annual Inter-Galaxy Luncheon. *(Pompously.)* It's not often we get the <u>important</u> people of the solar together.

Medias: Yes! I am well aware that time is precious. My visit is a short one; we must settle on the details as soon as possible.

Galor: I've been thinking, Medias, that it should be held right here on Mirth. *(Sips coffee between phrases, with growing displeasure.)* We've definitely got all the facilities--spanking new hotel complexes, swimming pools, casinos, nightclubs. *(Pause.)* Oh! Excuse me, this coffee is horrendous! Oh! *(Offhandedly tosses the cup down to Rolag, who is taking in the conversation and making a rapid drawing of a garden. Galor turns his attention to the chalkboard to develop criteria.)* Oh, let's see now. The

place should be *(as he is writing)*: 1) Interesting, hmm... 2) Fitting, hmm... *(makes gestures appropriate to thoughtful brainstorming)* And certainly, colorful and, well, traditional. *(While this is going on--Galor has his back turned and is all involved in thought--Rolag sneaks up the stairs with the garden drawing which is placed on Medias's lap. Medias looks at it, gives some sort of nonverbal pleased reaction, and Rolag slips down the stairs again. Medias folds the picture and puts it in a pocket. Meanwhile, the list completed, Galor repeats the whole thing, facing Medias, seeking approval.)* Yes, yes. Interesting, fitting, colorful, and *(with a flourish)* traditional.

Medias: Yes, I definitely agree, and your planet is an ideal location. But where exactly were you thinking of?

Galor: *(Getting a few brochures from the bulletin board and handing them to Medias.)* Well, I had been thinking of the "Upper Upper" or "Le Chic," two new hotel complexes located right in this fine city.

Medias: Hmm. Yes. *(Thoughtfully.)* Well, Galor, to be honest with you, I would prefer perhaps holding the event in, let's say, a garden or a park. It would be very charming to have it there. We don't have flowers or birds or trees on Equanil and my people cherish them. We could put up tables.

Galor: *(Galor is a bit annoyed that Medias is not taking his more sophisticated suggestions, but he is caught between putting forth his own ideas and pleasing Medias.) (Yielding.)* Hmm. Well, yes *(referring back to the list)*, it could be interesting, certainly colorful, yes, and traditional. We could have a garden designed especially for the occasion. *(With this brainstorming, he begins to get more enthusiastic.)* Yes, with special flower beds that spell out our names and fountains and exotic birds. One thing for sure; can't be just any garden. I'll get my team going on the best in town! *(This is said proudly and emphatically.)*

Medias: You know, Galor, practically any garden on Mirth will do. As I said before, my people, and I expect most others in Solar, would highly appreciate such a unique setting. Let us consider that issue settled, Galor. But what shall we eat at the luncheon?

(Meanwhile Rolag starts ticking on a new idea, drawing a bit more confidently on a new sheet of paper. The picture is of hamburgers, french fries, milkshakes.)

Galor: Let's see *(as he erases the "place" criteria to think of some "food" criteria)*, the food. Well, it should be... *(Mumbling; it's obvious that he is thinking up the same criteria all over again, even copying the words from what remains of what he has*

just erased. Back turned, he is again unable to see the interaction between Medias and Rolag. This time Medias leans forward in his chair, playing the game with Rolag and actually soliciting the idea by reaching out his hand to receive Rolag's latest drawing. Again, he surveys it, pleased, places it in his pocket, and turns his attention to Galor.) Hmm, the food should be interesting, fitting, ah...

Medias: *(Finishes the thought.)* Colorful...and traditional, I agree!

Galor: Yes, only the best, the best of course! My chefs are ready at any moment to prepare Peking Duck, Vichyssoise, Avocado Gazpacho, Basked Alaska, Moussaka--whatever from wherever. Which do you prefer, Medias? Whatever you want...

Medias: To tell you the truth, Galor, *(dreamily)* I love hamburgers and french fries and strawberry milkshakes.

Galor: *(Galor is really taken aback at this latest banality but must defer, as always. Decides he needs some coffee after being somewhat deflated. Turns his attention to Rolag below.) (Emphatically.)* Eh, well, I need another cup of coffee, Rolag.

Medias: Say, Galor, who is that anyway?

Galor: *(Irritated.)* Oh! That's Rolag. One of thousands. You see, they've got flat heads. It marks 'em. They're so silly and incompetent; it's downright dangerous. We don't even give them numbers; they couldn't keep track, and we can't bother with all the paper work or waste time on such foolishness.

Medias: Hmm...I see... *(audience knows he really does see).*

Galor: Where's my coffee! *(Clears his throat.)* So you'd like to have hamburgers. It certainly can be arranged. Hamburgers are a traditional dish here. That's true, and they would fit an outdoor garden location. Hmm. We could bring them in on silver platters. Okay? And the milkshakes in crystal goblets. Okay? I'll trust your judgment. Hamburgers it is! *(This is said with some resignation.)* A picnic cookout type of affair. If properly executed, it could be very quaint yet elegant. *(Emphatically.)* Settled.

Medias: Very well. Now onto the last matter--some good entertainment for our alien guests.

Galor: *(Glances quickly back at the criteria as if he is a bit lost without this reference point. Then starts over to the desk, rifling through piles of important-looking papers, muttering.)* Entertainment, entertainment, where are my materials? *(Getting impatient, rifling.)* I thought I put them right here. Oh,

well. Medias, you must excuse me for a moment. One of my secretaries must have them *(exits stage left). (Rolag points up, indicating still another good idea. Medias is receptive, motioning him to come up.)*

Medias: Rolag, you seem to be the one with all the good ideas. What do you think?

Rolag: *(A pantomime ensues in which Rolag blows up a balloon, lets it go into the sky, juggles, blows a trombone, gets enough activity going so that when Galor returns, a regular country fair is taking place. Medias is watching, guessing, delighted. Of course, Galor is beside himself with rage.)*

Galor: *(Galor is speechless for a while. Rolag finally sees him, decides it would be best to leave the scene and descends, more out of habit than shame.)* What is going on here? Rolag, you go to your place! *(Points down; meanwhile Medias becomes visibly disturbed, but does not speak.)* Medias, I must, as my duty, tell you that you must not associate with Rolags any time, any place, ever! They're the lowest of LOW! The wrenches in the works! The flies in the ice cubes. With all respect to you and your position, I must command you to stop associating with this lowly Rolag and any others that may stumble across your path while you are on this planet. Do I make myself quite clear?

Medias: *(Taken aback, getting somewhat ruffled, for the first time speaks of his dismay.)* Galor, I am very old! I have been alive since way before the planet Mirth ever was--or you--or Rolag, for that matter--and I am not accustomed to being addressed in such a rude manner! I would advise you to watch your step or I'll see to it that the Second Annual Inter-Galaxy Luncheon will never take place. I have come here and seen for myself just how things are on Mirth and I find it very peculiar. On my planet all ideas and suggestions are considered without regard to where they come from. And that is not the case here, as I can well see. *(He takes Rolag's drawings out of his pocket to show Galor, who is dumbfounded.)*

Galor: Why, these are Rolag's. Done with Rolag's crayons. *(Starts crumbling them up.)* Why, I don't believe it. I thought the garden was <u>your</u> idea. I would never, ever...

Medias: It's too late, Galor! All the issues have been settled! And, I might add, according to your own specifications. We have accomplished everything here and now I must go. Please keep me informed of any changes. Goodbye, Galor. Goodbye, Rolag. *(He disappears, leaving Galor still beside himself.)*

Galor: I really don't believe this. The meeting is over; Medias is gone; the issues have been settled. *(He ignores Rolag while he is saying this. Meanwhile, Rolag is sitting on the*

middle step, proudly facing the audience. Stunned, Galor begins to collect himself and gets ready to go home. He kicks a few balloons and trash down the stairs for Rolag to clean up. As he exits, he barks a few commands without looking at Rolag.)
And don't forget to empty the wastebaskets; get some more towels for the bathroom. I really need a new brand of coffee. *(His voice fades away.) (Rolag is left alone with the broom, cleaning up after the boss. The lights dim. The situation has returned to normalcy.)*

THE END